

# REFLECTIONS

BY THE EDITOR

## Labour in Conference

**B**RITISH labour men were in conference recently at Glasgow. They found fault with their parliamentary representatives as being too fond of the loaves and the fishes. As in Canada, the labour leaders grow fat and wealthy. They protested against the action of the South African Government in deporting labour leaders and then introducing an indemnity bill to make such action legal. Otherwise the labour people indulged in cautious and reasonable debate, even to the condemnation of syndicalism. They approved a development of the principle of the minimum wage, and desired to follow it up with an enquiry as to the possibility of state-regulated prices for domestic commodities.

This latter suggestion will appeal to most of us. If we had a law to compel the butcher to sell us porterhouse steaks at fifteen cents a pound, and bacon at the same price, it would be fine. May we suggest that the price of eggs be fixed at ten cents a dozen in the summer months and not more than twenty-five cents in the winter months. Also that anthracite coal be sold at the rate of \$5 per ton of 2,000 pounds.

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## A New Use for Armouries

**M**R. CASKEY, secretary of the Laymen's Missionary Movement, has made a suggestion which is worthy of some consideration. He thinks that the armouries which the Minister of Militia is building all over Canada might be used in the daytime as schools for the new citizens and their children. There are a large number of immigrants, old and young, coming into the country each year and the school capacity is taxed to its utmost. In many of the towns and cities it might be possible to use the armouries for school purposes without interfering in any way with their employment as storehouses for the arms and accoutrements of the militia. In the larger cities the militia use the armouries every night. In the smaller towns the armouries may not be in use more than one night in the week. It should be possible to utilize these public buildings for educational purposes.

Mr. Caskey goes farther. He thinks that the armouries might be employed as centres for supervised playgrounds and community work, with moving pictures as an educational feature, musical events and pageants by the people, addresses on sanitation, health, citizenship, law and history. The Minister of Militia is not a man of narrow views, and if the idea were taken up by committees of responsible citizens it seems reasonable to suppose that the Minister would lend his co-operation. If Canada has plenty of money to spend on the building of armouries and very little to spend on other public buildings for educational purposes, it would seem

only fair that permission should be given, especially in Western Canada, for the use of the armouries along the lines indicated. If used in this way there would be much less opposition to the building of what some people call "monuments to the spirit of militarism."

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## Wealth of the West

**W**HEN the three prairie provinces produce farm products of \$168,000,000 in one year, every person should have confidence in the future of that portion of the Dominion. That real estate got too high in price for a while, and that some towns and cities have been over-boomed, are merely incidents in the fast-developing district. Population considered, the West is producing marvellously.

Nor is wheat the only product now. Examine this table and see that wheat is little more than half the total.

Production in Prairie Provinces, 1913.	
Wheat .....	\$94,000,000
Oats .....	14,500,000
Barley .....	6,000,000
Flax .....	11,000,000
Cattle, Hogs and Sheep .....	24,000,000
Potatoes, Hay and Roots .....	13,500,000
Dairy Products .....	5,000,000
Total Farm Products .....	\$168,000,000

In five years the West will be called a "mixed farming" area, not a wheat field, and the partial failure of the grain crop, if it should occur, will not be as serious a matter as it would have been in any recent year. Wheat is now only one element in the wealth of the West, because coal, cement and other industrial materials are to be added to the other farm products mentioned in the foregoing table.

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## Prison Manufactures

**S**OME rather startling information is being gathered by the commission which is investigating prison conditions under the Dominion Department of Justice. A few days ago some revelations were made by a Mr. Taylor, who for many years had the right to employ the prisoners confined in the Ontario Central Prison. Mr. Taylor declared that he had made a profit varying from \$33,000 to \$120,000 a year out of this labour, which he paid for at four cents an hour. He stated that he believed every prison could be made self-supporting, that convicts were worth at least one dollar a day to the contractor, and that it was possible to market the product of prison labour without interfering with legitimate business.

At the present time the Federal Government and

each one of the provinces is paying a large sum annually for the support of penitentiaries and prisons. According to the experience of this contractor all these institutions can be made self-supporting if properly handled. Moreover, it is generally agreed that it would be much better for the prisoners if they were kept at trades work which would be beneficial to themselves and beneficial to the community. At the present time large numbers of these prisoners are loafing because there is a fear in the minds of officials that the labour unions object to the competition of prison labour. There are men in the unions who do make such objection, but they are a very small minority. Indeed, the best public opinion is agreed that the prison of the future will be a place in which a prisoner may earn enough money to pay for his board and have a surplus to send to his family. There is one prison farm in Ontario where the superintendent hires out the prisoners who are confined for minor offences, collects their wages and sends it to the family, if there is one. There is no law in Ontario to justify the action of this superintendent, but public opinion supports him in the policy.

Canada has much to learn in regard to prison administration, and when the present Commission makes its report it is to be hoped they will recommend some very radical changes.

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## Collapse in Money

**P**EOPLE are accustomed to hear about a collapse in the stock market or the wheat market, or the cotton market, or the steel market, but it is not often we hear of a collapse in the money market. Yet the money market has collapsed during the past month. The people who had money were holding it for a high price. There was a big demand for it and a lot of people put it in cold storage. When borrowers were bidding five, six, seven, and eight per cent. for money, these people refused to sell. They were apparently waiting for a higher price. Suddenly these capitalists, big and little, Canadian, British and foreign, found that there was too much money in sight. The price dropped. Everybody was rushing to get rid of his money. That was the situation in January.

The Bank of England discount rate tells the story. That rate was five per cent. during nearly the whole of 1913. In January of this year it dropped from five to four and a half per cent. Two weeks later it dropped to four per cent., and later to three per cent. A despatch sent out from London last week says that Lombard Street is glutted with money. On good, marketable securities, it was possible to borrow money at two per cent. Indeed, some bills were being discounted at one and thirteen-sixteenths per cent. It is reported that the over-night balances were so large that three-quarters of one per cent. was accepted for them.

In trying to understand this situation it should be remembered that the money-lender has the same human nature as the men who sell other commodities. If he thinks his commodity is scarce he demands a high price. If he finds it is plentiful he rushes into the market in the same way as any other seller and takes what he can get. The money problem is not such a difficult problem as most people seem to think.

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## Women and Theatres

**N**O one, not even the anti-suffragists, deny the moral influence of women on society. They help to make public opinion, which is, after all, the subtlest and most invincible power in the world. Because women have in this way as much power as men, Mr. Cyril Maude was led to say to the women students of Barnard College:

"It is the women not the men who rule the theatre. It is the women who keep the theatres open, who choose what styles of play shall be a success."

To women, then, if this be true, and Mr. Maude is an authority, we must look for the force which will keep the stage clean and its standards high. If they would appreciate the influence they wield and use it diligently and effectively they could do much to improve our social welfare while they are waiting for that inevitable right to vote.

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## The Imperial Rivals

**S**TIRRING the fires of imperial zeal proceeds apace under the stimulus of rival schools of thought. The Imperial Federationists are rich in organs, such as the "National Review," the "Round Table" magazine, and the London "Morning Post." The Britannic Alliance school has no organ. Richard Jebb and a few others have written articles and books, but the newer idea has had no regular organ. Now comes the announcement of "The Britannic Review," which is expected to appear in April. The term "Britannic" has been chosen in order to avoid the prejudices which have grown up around the word "Imperial." Milton used the term, "This Britannic Empire," and the sovereign has the title, "His Britannic Majesty." The new monthly will be a publication intended to reflect the ideals, aims and interests of the Empire, but it will favour "Alliance" rather than "Federation." The Canadian price will be \$3.25, and it may be ordered through any news agent, or from the Britannic Publishing Co., 15 Dartmouth Street, London, S.W.



LAST HONOURS TO LORD STRATHCONA.

The late Lord Strathcona's remains were carried to Westminster Abbey, on January 26th, the honorary pall-bearers being Lord Aberdeen, Lord Lansdowne, the Duke of Argyll, Rt. Hon. Lewis Harcourt, Sir William Osler, Sir Thomas Skinner, George A. Smith, and W. L. Griffith. After the ceremony there, they were taken to Highgate Cemetery and deposited in an underground vault. The latter ceremony is pictured here.